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JAILS

Texas Tribune: Texas prosecutors want to keep low-level criminals out of overcrowded jails. Top Republicans and police aren't happy.

Dallas County District Attorney John Creuzot announced policy reforms last month that he said would be "a step forward" in ending mass incarceration in Dallas. His plans include decreasing the use of excessively high bail amounts and no longer prosecuting most first-time marijuana offenses.

But part of his plan included a decision not to prosecute thefts of personal items under $750 that are stolen out of necessity. Immediately, Creuzot came under fire from state officials and police leaders who said the policy was irresponsible and would encourage criminal activity.

The Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas, the largest police union in the state, called for Creuzot to step down. Gov. Greg Abbott fired off a series of tweets criticizing the policy and wrote a joint letter with Attorney General Ken Paxton that said the DA should reconsider his position and leave criminal justice reforms up to the Legislature.

Creuzot's policy and the ensuing backlash highlight growing tensions among local district attorneys who want to reform a criminal justice system they say is broken and other public officials who believe that letting criminals skate could make cities more dangerous.

MARIJUANA

Denver Post: Colorado Supreme Court rules police need probable cause before using pot-sniffing dogs to search for drugs

The Colorado Supreme Court greatly diminished the role of police dogs trained to detect marijuana with a ruling Monday that created another divide between how state and federal law enforcement can investigate pot.

In a 4-3 ruling, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that, under the state constitution, a dog trained to alert to marijuana cannot be used before an officer establishes probable cause that a crime had been committed.

For decades, police dogs were trained to alert their handlers to the presence of pot. But since Coloradans voted in 2012 to legalize recreational possession of small amounts of the drug, the dogs' sniff tests have been controversial because they can alert even if a person has a legal amount of marijuana.

Monday's ruling effectively renders the dogs trained to detect pot useless in most situations, said Sam Kamin, a law professor at the University of Denver who studies marijuana law and policy. Previously, the dogs' sniff tests were used to create probable cause for a search. Now, there has to be enough evidence to authorize a search before a marijuana-trained dog can be used, making the dogs' sniff tests redundant.

SEXUAL OFFENSES

Cleveland.com: Gov. Mike DeWine: End statute of limitations for rape in wake of Ohio State sex abuse report

In the wake of revelations that ex-Ohio State University athletic doctor Richard Strauss sexually abused at least 177 male students between 1979 and 1998, Gov. Mike DeWine on Monday called on Ohio lawmakers to abolish the state's statute of limitations for sexual assault.

During a Statehouse news conference, the governor also urged legislators to extend the statute of limitations for other sex crimes, take a "hard look" at extending the statute of limitations for civil lawsuits, and toughen penalties for sex crimes committed by authority figures.

Strauss, who killed himself in 2005, likely couldn't be prosecuted for most of his crimes if he was alive today, DeWine said, because Ohio's statute of limitations for rape is 20-25 years, depending on the circumstances. The time limit on prosecuting other felony sex crimes is as little as six years, he said. Charges for misdemeanor sex crimes such as groping and fondling must be filed within two years, and civil lawsuits must be filed within 1-2 years.

The governor also signed an executive order creating a working group of state and law-enforcement officials to study an unredacted version of an OSU report released last Friday to see whether the Ohio State Medical Board knew about Strauss' abuse of young men - and, if so, whether the board did anything in response.

GUN REGULATIONS

USA Today: NRA helps sheriffs fight gun laws in Second Amendment 'sanctuaries'

In a rural pocket of New Mexico, Sheriff Ian Fletcher fights back against new state firearm

laws he calls unconstitutional, decrying "out-of-state gun control groups" in a column the Catron Courier newspaper published this spring.

Fletcher's missive is part of a campaign among representatives of at least 75 cities and counties nationwide that call themselves Second Amendment sanctuaries, opposing enforcement of gun background checks and emergency protection orders.

The only problem: Fletcher didn't write the column; a lobbyist with the National Rifle Association did.

The nation's firearm debate is playing out in these rural counties, where sheriffs hold broad policing authority, as well as in Denver's suburbs, where a Republican sheriff faces recall for backing gun control laws.

On one side are groups such as the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, which exposed the NRA-written columns Monday, and the Giffords Law Center, which released an analysis of the firearm suicide rates in Second Amendment sanctuaries. On the other are gun rights groups, such as those that organized a protest against the laws at Colorado's Capitol on Saturday that drew hundreds waving "Don't tread on me" flags and signs that read, "We the people will not give up our guns."

Colorado passed a "red flag law" this month, becoming the 15th state in addition to Washington, D.C., to do so. Similar legislation is pending in 20 other states.

PRIVACY ISSUES

The Guardian (UK): Office worker launches UK's first police facial recognition legal action

An office worker who believes his image was captured by facial recognition cameras when he popped out for a sandwich in his lunch break has launched a groundbreaking legal battle against the use of the technology.

Supported by the campaign group Liberty, Ed Bridges, from Cardiff, raised money through crowdfunding to pursue the action, claiming the suspected use of the technology on him by South Wales police was an unlawful violation of privacy.

Facial recognition technology maps faces in a crowd and then compares them to a watchlist of images, which can include suspects, missing people and persons of interest to the police. The cameras scan faces in large crowds in public places such as streets, shopping centres, football crowds and music events such as the Notting Hill carnival.

MENTAL ILLNESS

Bozeman (MT) Daily Chronicle: Bozeman police see more calls for help, look toward behavioral health efforts

Bozeman Police Chief Steve Crawford said law enforcement who arrive at the scene of a mental health crisis may soon show up alongside a counselor. That comes as officers see an uptick in calls.

Crawford said Monday he believes the area's community-based crisis response could roll out sometime this summer. The program is a collaboration with Gallatin Mental Health Center and the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office.

Crawford touched on the program as he presented the department's annual report to city commissioners. He said using more ways to respond to behavioral health issues will be a priority over the next year.

OFFICER WELLNESS

Iowa City Press-Citizen: Law enforcement agencies welcome peer support programs

It's been about a year since the Iowa City Police Department started its peer support team, and now the program is growing increasingly popular in neighboring law enforcement agencies.

Every day officers drive with lights and sirens to help people they've never met. At the same time, it's hard to reach out to each other after responding to a tough scene, said Officer Ashley Jay.

When she and a handful of law enforcement officers from Johnson County received crisis intervention training in San Antonio, Texas, a few years ago, they learned about peer-to-peer support groups.

Jay asked Iowa City Police Chief Jody Matherly if they could look into having their own formal peer support team. Now, she and seven officers are trained on how to reach out to coworkers who are struggling with professional or personal issues.

Law enforcement agencies hope that by providing confidential support from peers, officers can better serve their communities.

OFFICER WELLNESS

KARE 11 Minneapolis: Officer shares mental health challenges to help save others

As May comes to end so does mental health awareness month. But the talks don't have to end. Earlier this month, a St. Paul Police Officer was honored for saving the life of a shooting victim. But he said that life he saved changed him. Now, he hopes his story will help others get help.

COMMUNITY POLICING

Bismarck (ND) Tribune: New Bismarck community policing program aims to connect with public

The Bismarck Police Department on Monday announced the launch of its Bismarck Community Oriented Policing Program, an effort by the department to work more closely with the public.

The program will include six Community Policing Districts, a revival of the Neighborhood Crime Watch program, and Business Watch, a companion program to Neighborhood Crime Watch.

Sgt. John Brocker said the programs are designed to promote relationships between the department and neighborhoods, connect neighbors with one another, and help people recognize and report suspicious activity.

POLICE EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

Baltimore Sun: Baltimore Police hires two key deputies - including one who has publicly criticized State's Attorney Mosby

Baltimore Police Commissioner Michael Harrison on Tuesday named two new deputy commissioners from outside the department who will oversee key areas- including day-to-day operations of thousands of officers and misconduct investigations.

Michael Sullivan, a police officer who has served his career at Louisville (Ky.) Police Department, will oversee the operations bureau, which includes criminal investigations and patrol. Michelle Wilson, an assistant Maryland attorney general, will oversee the public integrity bureau which includes internal affairs. Wilson recently publicly contradicted Baltimore State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby's account of an incident central to a lawsuit against Mosby brought by a former city prosecutor.

Harrison has restructured the department into four bureaus, three of which will now be headed by civilians.

POLICE EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

Fresno (CA) Bee: Here's what Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer must complete before running for mayor

Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer plans to move into the city limits and meet with key people before he would launch a 2020 bid for mayor.

Dyer, 60, is retiring as Fresno police chief in October. After Mayor Lee Brand announced on Monday he won't seek re-election, Dyer said he's seriously considering running.

"My name has come up for the mayoral election several times over the last 11 years," he said in an interview with The Bee. "Each time, I had to give something up in order to run for mayor. That was being police chief, something that I dearly love. I love protecting the people of Fresno. But now, that is no longer a privilege that I have effective October, nor will it be something I have to struggle with."

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